"We who believe in freedom" recognize the importance of traditions that ensure we stay connected in our commitment to liberation and our very survival. The work of social action and the labor of enduring multiple oppressions often take an invisible toll. We need restoration and recreation that cannot be generated by emails or tweets. For those of us who are transgender, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, intersex, questioning—for the woman, the brown skinned, the physically challenged, isolation and silence kills, fellowship and expression sustains. We gather, we speak, we eat so that we may live. The Rustin Lorde breakfast has grown from an event to a cherished tradition to which we look forward every year!

The breakfast celebrates our strengths. resilience, the ability to endure, the will to bounce back, the act of adaptation, the art of improvisation, rebirth, and renewal. It is our "deeper love", what Aretha describes as "the power that gives you the strength to survive." If we are as _____ proclaims, "the ones we have been waiting for," it is imperative that we honor our own power and our possibilities to be realized. " We do this by lifting up the names of Bayard Rustin and Audre Lorde. It is not enough to merely rehearse and regurgitate their words or recount their actions. It is when we ingest the meanings infusing these words, the small histories and mundane miracles these words only signify, then we understand how mighty these immortals, once beings no less flawed then us, truly were and in doing so we are moved to ponder our own limitless capacities.

For every legend, there are others whose acts of radical love, courage and brilliance are not the stuff of history yet are recorded in precious memories and passed down generations through our storytelling. By these testimonies we recognize that queer excellence is cultivated by communities- mentors, friends, lovers, "gay " or "house" mothers and fathers, biological parents and teachers who set standards for us and challenge us to meet or surpass them. In 2012, in the midst of a recoiling economy, compromised national leadership, and a motivated conservative populism that is rabidly racist, homophobic , transphobic and misogynist, how are our communities poised to instill the radical love, courage and brilliance needed to make change possible? We must acknowledge the efforts of our unsung as well as our heroes to comprehend our own potential. Resilience is by no means the exclusive trait of the extraordinary figures we tend to celebrate. Knowing this we share our own strengths and victories with each other submitting evidence that blunts our doubts and re-ignites our will to act.

.We need the full engagement of all communities. And when we stand for the human rights of all our sisters and brothers not just those deemed more acceptable by the dominant society,

then our communities evolve into the beloved community. In a country where transgenders and gender non conforming people face discrimination in every category, are harassed, shot, stabbed, and mutilated year round, how is that marriage equality is the focal point of queer liberation? Why is it that we remember Matthew Sheppard's name and not Shelly Hilliard, the 19 year old trans woman whose mother identified her by the tattoo on her decapitated and burnt body? This year we invite you will learn as you teach, seek and give guidance, commit your time in a new way, and most importantly to show love and be loved by somebody, as you enjoy all the good food and warm company. When we prepare to show up at the edge of each other's battles we form a mighty wave. We make a revolution. We are so excited, so thankful that you are Here where love is not only the message, it is the revolutionary act!

Evening for Equality Acceptance Speech